

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 153566

FOR ASST SEC HOLBROOKE ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT SEOUL 5538 ACTION STATE INFO BANGKOK HONG KONG
JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR MANILA MOSCOW PEKING TAIPEI TOKYO JULY 1.

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5538

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: KS, US

SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO SECRETARY VANCE'S SPEECH

REF: A) SEOUL 5516; G) SEOUL 5426; C) SEOUL 5482

SUMMARY: ROK REACTION TO SECRETARY VANCE'S JUNE 29 SPEECH
WAS MIXED. MOST OBSERVERS EXPRESSED GRATIFICATION FOR REITERA-
TION OF U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENT AND SOME EXPRESSED CONCERN AT
APPARENT INCOSNISTENCY ITH U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL.
END SUMMARY.

1. ROK REACTION TO SECRETARY VANCE'S SPEECH AS OF JULY 1
WAS MIXED. INDEPENDENT MASS CIRCULATION HANKUK ILBO
EDITORIAL WAS CRITICAL OF SPEECH, CHARACTERIZING
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SECRETARY'S REASSURANCES ABOUT U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENT
AS LARGELY RHETORICAL AND SAYING THAT THERE WAS NO
PROVISION FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL. EDITORIAL CLAIMED KOREA
NO LONGER TRUSTS U.S. LEADING INDEPENDENT DONG-A ILBO
EDITORIAL WAS SIMILAR TO HANKUK ILBO BUT SOMEWHAT MILDER.
THE EDITORIAL SAID THERE WAS NO REASON TO DOUBT SECRETARY
VANCE'S PROMISE OF U.S. DEFENSE COMMITMENT BUT DOUBTS ABOUT

NECESSITY OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL REMAIN. SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG SHINMUN AND INDEPENDENT SIN- ILBO EDITORIALS WERE MILD. BOTH EXPRESSED RELIEF AT SECRETARY'S REITERATION OF DEFENSE COMMITMENT AND SAID U.S.-NORTH-SOUTH KOREA CROSS RECOGNITION FORMULA WAS REASSURING. BOTH EDITORIALS ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER REPORTED REMARKS BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE (REF B). OFFICIAL SEOUL SHINMUN INTERESTINGLY CARRIED NO EDITORIAL ON SECRETARY'S SPEECH APART FROM MOFA'S OFFICIAL STATEMENT (REF A),

2. MOFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS BUREAU DIRECTOR PAK SANG-YONG'S COMMENTS TO POLCOUNS JULY 1 ON SECRETARY'S SPEECH WERE MORE UPBEAT THAN IN CONVERSATION REPORTED REF C. HE SAID THAT SPEECH HAD BEEN GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED AT FOREIGN MINISTRY AND WAS APPRECIATED. HE ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THAT REACTION AMONG ROK PUBLIC WOULD ALSO BE FAVORABLE. PAK MADE NO REFERENCE TO RESERVATIONS HE HAD EXPRESSED EARLIER. PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT KIM KYONG-WON IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JULY 1 NOTED WITH APPARENT RELIEF THAT SPEECH HAD CONTAINED NO SURPRISES. HE ADDED WITH A NOTE OF REGRET THAT PRIOR TO FALL OF VIETNAM KOREANS HAD EXCESS OF CONFIDENCE IN U.S. COMMITMENT AND NOW APPEARED TO BE SUFFERING FROM EXCESS OF ANXIETY ABOUT AMERICAN COMMITMENT WHICH SECRETARY'S SPEECH UNFORTUNATELY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ABLE TO OVERCOME.

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3. IN SUM, ROK REACTION TO SECRETARY'S SPEECH CONTINUES TO BE MIXED. ROK OPINION LEADERS APPEARED TO BE SOMEWHAT REASSURED BUT STILL UNCERTAIN ABOUT ULTIMATE IMPACT OF SPEECH AGAINST BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT TROOP WITHDRAWAL. SNEIDER UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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